



Office of the Mayor

NEWS RELEASE

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Prestigious stadium designer to create Coveleski plan

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The firm that designed Baltimore's Oriole Park at Camden Yards and Cleveland's Jacobs Field will create a conceptual development plan for a reoriented entrance to Coveleski Regional Stadium and a new ballpark district in the downtown.

HOK Sport Inc., based in Kansas City, Mo., will prepare a district master plan for the ballpark property and the adjacent blocks as well as a plan for improvements for the stadium itself after the Redevelopment Commission today approved a request by staff of the city's Department of Community and Economic Development. HOK also was the architect when Coveleski Stadium was built in 1987.

"The goal of the project is to develop a neighborhood plan that includes both vacant parcels and, where possible, some of the notable nearby structures – and that also develops a strategy for long-term investment in the neighborhood," said Bill Schalliol, the city's economic development specialist managing the project.

The district master plan is one of four project components, including land acquisition, steps to enhance the stadium's facility and the creation of a budget for the overall effort.

The Commission authorized the city to pay HOK Sport \$45,700 to develop the district master plan and \$30,350 for the stadium improvement plan. The city also will reimburse the firm for travel, lodging and other expenses in preparing its report.

"This step represents only the first pitch by the city in what we see as a full season of comprehensive redevelopment of the baseball district," said Jeff Gibney, interim director of the city's Department of Community and Economic Development. "We believe that a first-rate conceptual redevelopment plan will bring in Big League outside private

investment.”

The Redevelopment Commission will consider in its Nov. 2 meeting a resolution to amend the boundaries of the city’s Central Development Area to make this project possible and to begin acquisition of several parcels, including most of the property north of the stadium and south of Western Avenue between William Street and Lafayette Boulevard. The plan includes the acquisition of other property at the northwest corner of Wayne and Taylor streets, the northwest corner of Lafayette Boulevard and Western Avenue, and a parcel along Jefferson Boulevard due north of the stadium.

The conceptual development planning work will begin in mid-November with a “kick-off workshop” and last about six weeks, culminating in a final presentation to the city’s Redevelopment Commission. The planning area boundaries are from Bronson Street on the south to Wayne Street on the north, and from Michigan Street on the east to Scott Street on the west. The final plan would include short-, mid- and long-term strategies for the city to pursue.

With the anticipated relocation of Gates Toyota to the new south-side Erskine Commons shopping center, the city is looking to acquire properties owned by Gates in the southern section of downtown for future planned development. The city’s three-year downtown strategy, announced in August, seeks to control former Gates properties, including the old Sears building, with an eye to potential public-private development in concert with a new stadium entrance through centerfield.

Built for \$11 million in 1987, Coveleski Stadium is worth an estimated \$35 million to \$40 million today. The stadium is owned by the City of South Bend, which leases the facility to the South Bend Silver Hawks, a Class A minor league baseball franchise. Planners consider the relocation of the Gates dealership to represent a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to connect “the Cove” with downtown in a new way.